

Application No.: 10/800580
Amendment dated: September 14, 2007
Reply to Office action of April 18, 2007

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claim 1 has been amended to address the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) on JP '990 and Legge et al. In particular, claim 1 now recites that the elastic section is a section "consisting of urethane resin." This limitation is supported by the description in paragraph 0046 of the Applicant's specification.

With the current amendment, claim 1 now defines a wet paper web transfer belt in which the elastic section consists of urethane resin while the exposed parts of the fiber body are hydrophilic. This combination of features is in direct contrast to what is taught in JP '990.

As noted previously, the concept taught in JP '990 is to render either the elastic section or the protruding fibers "hydrophobic." The examples in JP '990 fall into two groups. In the first group (Examples 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10), in each of which urethane resin is employed, the fibers are described as "hydrophobic." On the other hand, in the remaining examples (Examples 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11), nylon, a hydrophilic fiber, is used as the protruding fiber, and the urethane resin is made hydrophobic by the incorporation of silicone oil into the resin. The examples in JP '990 have been reviewed both in the machine translation, and in the original Japanese text, to confirm the above observations.

From the examples in JP '990, it becomes clear that the document essentially teaches that, when the elastic material consists of urethane, the fibers should be hydrophobic, and, conversely, when the fibers are hydrophilic, the elastic material should consist of a mixture of urethane resin and silicone oil. It follows that the Japanese reference teaches away from the invention as defined by claim 1, as amended. In particular, it teaches that, when the fibers are hydrophilic,

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the elastic material can contain urethane resin, but should not be a material "consisting of urethane resin."

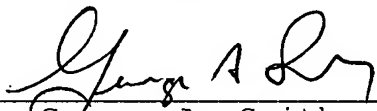
Legge, which was relied upon to show equivalency between nylon and other hydrophilic fibers such as wool, cotton, or vinyl, does not affect the above conclusion that JP '990 teaches away from the invention.

New claim 5, which specifies that the fiber body consists of fibers from the group consisting of nylon fibers, vinylon fibers, rayon fibers, cotton fibers and wool fibers, is supported in paragraph 0027 of Applicant's specification. Claim 5 further distinguishes the invention from JP '990 because, in each case in which JP '990 utilizes hydrophilic fibers, e.g. nylon fibers, the elastic material consists of mixture of urethane resin and silicone oil.

In summary, JP '990 would not lead a person of ordinary skill in the art to make a wet paper transfer belt having an elastic section consisting of urethane resin and exposed nylon fibers or other hydrophilic exposed fibers. Rather, JP '990 teaches away from the invention as now claimed.

Favorable reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully requested in view of the amendments and arguments presented herein.

Respectfully submitted,
HOWSON & HOWSON LLP

By 
George A. Smith, Jr.
Reg. No. 24,442
Howson & Howson LLP
Suite 210
501 Office Center Drive
Fort Washington, PA 19034
Telephone: 215 540 9200
Facsimile: 215 540 5818

Enclosures

- (a) RCE
- (b) EXTENSION REQUEST
- (c) Check covering RCE fee and extension fee